

William Lawrence Galvin Collection

Gift of Martin Hill and Lauren Harder, 2011-2012

30 Linear Feet (4 Filing Boxes, 8 Architectural Records Bins)

Processed by: Aliza Leventhal, December 2011-June 2013

Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Mass. 02139

Description

The William L. Galvin Collection was donated by Martin Hill and Lauren Harder, property developers who acquired Galvin's house and home office from Galvin's daughters, Patricia C. Galvin and Sheila A. Moe, in 2011. Many of Galvin's personal effects and the contents of his office were in the house at the time of sale, and the new owners allowed the Historical Commission staff to enter the property on several occasions to salvage material of interest.

The collection contains print and photographic materials of William L. Galvin's professional records and architectural drawings. This collection consists of correspondence, writing, articles, government records, photographs and drawings that depict Galvin's professional career. The core of the collection consists of drawings for over 1,000 architectural projects, of which about 530 projects in Cambridge have been catalogued. The collection also includes some objects and ephemera from Galvin's office, including a stainless steel office sign and an engraved glass transom from one of Galvin's most important commissions, the Cambridge Federal Savings Bank at 38A Brattle Street (1937). This collection provides valuable insight into Galvin's personality and professional work that has left a lasting mark on the landscape of the City of Cambridge.

Biography

William Lawrence Galvin (March 4, 1902 – August 25, 1983) was a native of Roxbury whose mother moved the family to Cambridge so William could prepare for Harvard. After attending several local schools, including the Rindge Technical School, the Huntington School, and the Cambridge High & Latin School, Galvin was admitted to Harvard College in 1920. His undergraduate academic career involved several instances of academic probation and changes in concentrations. During a leave of absence, Galvin worked for R. Curry Grovestein (1866-1941), a carpenter from Nova Scotia who became a self-trained architect, builder, and property developer. After this experience Galvin decided to become a "promoting architect" and opened a real estate office in Harvard Square while still an undergraduate. After a final make-up session at summer school in 1925 Galvin graduated with a concentration in Fine Arts, focused on architecture. He returned to Harvard in 1928, and obtained a Masters degree from the School of Architecture in 1931.

Galvin's entrepreneurial nature drove his professional career. Beginning his own architectural office in Harvard Square, Galvin aggressively sought commissions for projects big and small throughout the greater Cambridge area. In addition to his architectural work, Galvin sponsored and designed several commercial and residential real estate projects throughout the municipality and also served as an appraiser. As a member of the Cambridge Board of Zoning Appeals, Cambridge Citizen Committee, Municipal Affairs Committee (chairman in 1935), and American Institute of Architects, he proved himself to be an invested member of the Cambridge community. In 1938 Galvin married Julia O'Keefe, with whom he had two daughters: Patricia C. Galvin and Sheila A. Moe.

Over a 50-year career, 1927-1979, Galvin made a significant impact on the landscape of Cambridge through his numerous projects and constant support for progressive land use to fit a modernizing Cambridge community. Although several of his most prominent works are no longer standing, his work played an integral role in the growth and development of Cambridge. Acutely interested in high-density housing, Galvin dedicated a large amount of time and effort throughout the 1960s-70s attempting to win permission for a 10-story luxury apartment complex that he called "Golf Pond." This failed project at 680 Huron Avenue demonstrated the limits of Galvin's extensive involvement in local politics and vision for Cambridge's landscape.

Scope and Content

This collection contains the business records of William Lawrence Galvin, a lifelong architect in Cambridge, MA, during the mid-twentieth century. Due to the limited time and resources only Galvin's Cambridge projects have been catalogued, amounting to about half of his professional output from 1935 until the late 1970s, with the majority of the records dated from the late 1950s/early 1960s and later. The main project from this period featured in this collection is Galvin's attempted construction of a 10-story luxury apartment complex at 680 Huron Avenue. Plans for sites outside Cambridge have been retained for later cataloguing.

The collection consists predominately of Galvin's architectural projects, including those contracted by Galvin, and professional interests, ranging from committee records to article clippings. Galvin's community activism is reflected in his correspondence, personal writings and a variety of professional and political materials saved throughout his career. There are approximately 60 photographs and negatives, presumably taken or acquired by Galvin, connected to this collection of his projects and the general Cambridge area. The inventory of this collection is very detailed and arranged by topic, namely projects and professional development and interests with sub-categories. The boxes are arranged to reflect this order.

Series I –Projects

Galvin worked on a variety of architectural projects including single-family homes, apartment buildings, hotels and office spaces. In addition, he engaged in real estate ventures that resulted in intense correspondence and diligent applications for re-zoning. Over 500 of Galvin's projects are included in this collection, of which the most heavily documented are the Cambridge Federal Savings Bank (1937), a residential development at Brattle Circle (1938-42) and an unbuilt project at 680 Huron Avenue (1960-76). Project plans have been heavily curated: prints were discarded if originals were present, as were design details of buildings known to have been demolished. Design development sketches were uniformly retained.

Series II – Work and Related Interests

Throughout his career, Galvin established himself as an active member of his communities; his involvement in several professional organizations and municipal committees is only partially reflected in this collection. This collection consists of presentation materials, project lists, committee records, and an assortment of articles related to trends in the architectural and urban planning fields.

Series III – Photographs

This is a miscellaneous collection of photographs, most of which have been linked to several of Galvin's major projects such as the Lesley College dormitory and dining hall and his residential development on Brattle Circle. The quality and type of photograph varies as a result of advancements in technology over Galvin's lengthy career.

Series IV – Education

This series sporadically documents the Galvin's education, from his high school diploma, architectural problem sets from graduate school, and personal records obtained through the Harvard College Archives.

Series V – Miscellany

This is a collection of various mementos from Galvin's life, including: his daughter Patricia's high school diploma, Rotary Club Rosters, and high quality drafting pencils. This series is the unintentional byproduct of the initial acquisition of Galvin's materials in 2011.

Series VI – Architectural Drawings

Though the majority of the 500+ rolls of drawings lack dates, it is clear through physical condition and changes in aesthetic styles that this series offers a cross-section glimpse into Galvin's extensive career. Refer to the Galvin Photograph Index for fullest record of each roll and its location

Cambridge Historical Commission
October 21, 2013

Box 1
Series 1: Projects

Folder Number	Folder Name	Date
	680 Huron Avenue (13 folders)	
1	Zoning General	1935-1976
2	Board of Zoning Appeals: Ordinance & Appeals	1950-1974
3	Board of Zoning Appeals: Ordinance & Appeals	1964-1967
4	Correspondence	1960-1971
5	May Street – Mangano Property	1960
6	Waste Disposal Correspondence & Images	1963-1968
7	Letter Drafts (VFW, Board of Zoning Appeals, etc.)	1965-1974
8	Articles, Correspondence & Writing	1966-1970
9	Writing	1970
10	VFW Post Issues	1965-1968
11	Legal Proceedings	1953-1977
12	Superior Court – Bill in Equity	1964-1967
13	Wm. L. Galvin v. City of Cambridge Board of Zoning Appeals	1968-1977
	201 Alewife Brook Parkway – Cambridge Federal Savings Bank (3 folders)	
14	Cambridge Federal Savings Bank	1937-1965
15	Cambridge Federal Savings Bank	1962
16	Cambridge Federal Savings Bank	1964-1966
	16 Garden Street - The Commander Hotel (1 folder)	
17	The Commander Hotel	1949-1951
	228, 230 & 13 Brattle - Brattle Circle (2 folders)	
18	228- Brattle Street – Contract	ND
19	Brattle Circle Corresponding	1949 – 1961
	674-684 Huron Avenue – Cider Mill Pond (1 folder)	
20	Cedar Mill Pond – Site Investigation	1949-1966
	Concord Avenue, Belmont – Belmont & Maine Railroad (3 folders)	
21	Correspondence – Board of Selectmen	1965
22	Deed of Property	1956-1961
23	B&M Railroad – 3 Parcels on Concord Avenue	1956-1965
24	Belmont & Maine Railroad	1965
	976 Massachusetts Avenue, Tech Motors (1 folder)	
25	Contract & Finances – Tech Motors	1958
	447 Concord Avenue – Lyman Realty – Closing Fern Street (1 folder)	
26	Lyman Realty – Closing Fern Street	1961-1963
	Estate of Bertha Cohen (1 folder)	
27	Estate of Bertha Cohen	1963-1965
	30 Boylston Street (1 folder)	

28	30 Boylston Street Alteration	1969-1970
	127-133 Walden Street	
29	127-133 Walden Street	1971
	28-30 Boylston Street (1 folder)	
30	John Waugh – 2 nd Means of Egress	1971

Box 2

Series 2: Work and Related Interests

31	Stationary & Marketing	1930s
32	Plans & Film Lists	1941
33	Presentation Materials	1943-1955
34	Treasurer of Massachusetts Chapter of AIA	1958-1961
35	Qualifications & Representative Work	1961-1963
36	Municipal Affairs Committee	1933-1955
37	Cambridge Politics	1950s-1970s
38	Political Writing	1968
39	Political Article Clippings	1969-1974
40	Planning Housing Articles	1943-1978
41	Walter Gropius Articles	1969
42	Miscellaneous Materials	1969-1971
43	The Granby Apartments – Specifications & Contracts	1925-1928
44	Alewife Brook Park Shopping Plaza	1970
45	Materials Information & Samples	1974
46	Miscellaneous Correspondence	1939-1966

Box 3

Series 3: Photographs

	Brattle Circle/Street	
	Cambridge Federal Savings Bank	1965
	Fresh Pond Shopping Center	1954
	Lesley College Dormitory and Dining Hall	1957
	Somerville School	1935&1953
	Portrait and Family Photos	
	Miscellaneous Projects	
	Miscellaneous Images	

Box 4

Series 4: Photographs

	High School Diploma from Cambridge High & Latin School	1920
	Architectural Problem Sets	
	Fine Arts Course Booklets	

	Galvin's personal records from Harvard College Archives	
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Box 4

Series 5: Photographs

	Cambridge Public School Association meeting minutes, notebook believed to be Galvin's mother's.	1914-1931
	Rotary Club Rosters	1950 & 1952
	Random Key – Dickson Bros. – Galvin, 5 PM	
	Retractable measuring tape – from Reliance Co-Operative Bank, Cambridge, MA	
	Pocket Plexiglas Magnifying Glass	
	Key Chain – “MEN 1381 L Street 1954”	1954?
	Inspector Badge – Junior Fire Dept. – Cambridge	
	Lock w/ key	
	Patricia Galvin's High School Diploma	1963
	2 Boxes of Drafting Pencils	

Oversized materials Box 1-7

Series 6: Architectural Drawings

Refer to Galvin Photograph Index for fullest record of each roll and its location.

Appendix A: Galvin Photograph Index

Found on the Historical Share Drive, Galvin Collection Folder, Photographs of Architectural Drawings File

Appendix B: Galvin's Abbreviated Library

The following books were unintentionally acquired during the first collection of Galvin materials in 2011. These do not reflect Galvin's complete library, nor can they be considered a cross-section of his collecting habits. The majority of these texts can be located in the Cambridge Historical Commission's Library; several have been distributed to other local institutions.

1. Bell & Gosset Co., *B&G Handbook*, Morton Grove, IL: Bell & Gossett Co., 1940.
2. Blaney, Henry R., *Old Boston: reproduction of etchings in half tones*, Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1896 (wood cuts)
3. Hannah Winthrop Chapter, N.S.D.A.R., *Historic Guide to Cambridge*, Cambridge, MA: 1907.

4. Frost, Jack, *Harvard & Cambridge: A Sketch Book*, New York: Coward-McCann Inc., 1940.
5. Architectural and Building Code Service, *Frame Construction Details*, Chicago, IL, Washington, D.C.: National Lumber Manufacturers Association, 1923.
6. Raley, Dorothy (ed.), *A Century of Progress: Homes and Furnishing as exhibited at the World's Fair, Chicago 1934*, Chicago, IL: M.A. Ring Company Publishers, 1934
7. *Architectural Record*, The New Age of Architecture: The New Role of the Architect; Vol. 140 No. 1 (July 1966). 75th Anniversary Issue
8. Bacon, Edwin M., *Boston: A Guide Book*, Cambridge: The Anthanaem Press, 1928 (Compliments of Ginn and Company)
9. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Board of Registration of Architects, *Registered Architects Roster as of 1 May 1966*. "Publication of this Document Approved by Alfred C. Holland, State Purchasing Agent." **Contains annotations by WLG
10. *City of Cambridge Massachusetts Zoning Ordinance*, Cambridge, MA: Authority of the Council of The City of Cambridge, 1943. (MAP INCLUDED)
11. Building Code of Cambridge, Massachusetts, *Construction, Use, Maintenance, and Inspections of Buildings and Structures*. Cambridge: The Miche Company, 1944.
12. ND – Interstate's Street Guide & Directory of Information – 2 copies
13. Freeman, Donald (ed.), The Boston Society of Architects chapter of American Institute of Architects, *Boston Architecture*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1970.
14. Geib, Louis and Arthur P. Windolph, *Chimney – Pieces: Supplement No. 2-4*, New York: Jacobson Mantel & Ornament Co, 1929. Provided by Robert S. Bickford via AIA '28
15. The Information Center of Harvard University, *Building Harvard: Architecture of Three Centuries*. Cambridge, MA: The President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1968.
16. Hitchcock, Henry-Russell, *A Guide to Boston Architecture 1637-1954: Including Other Communities Within Easy Driving Distance*. New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1954. (For AIA)
17. Truesdell, Leon E., *Housing: Analytical Maps Cambridge, MA: Block Statistics*. New York City, WPA War Services.
18. Printed under the direction of the City Council Committee, *Cambridge: Seventy-Five Years a City*. Boston: E.L. Grimes Company Printers, 1922.
19. Atkinson, Robert et al. *A Book of Design: By Senior Students of the Architectural Association School*. London: Ernest Benn, LTD., 1924.
20. Rouillion, Louis, and Charles G. Ramsey, *Archictural Details*. New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1924. **WLG's SCHOOL BOOK**
21. *Comparative Architectural Details: The Pencil Point Series – 1937-1938*. New York: The Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1939.
22. Luckman, Charles, *The Future of Design*. Address at the 29th annual dinner meeting Massachusetts Building Congress, Inc. Boston, MA January 14, 1960
23. Johnson, Thomas F., James R. Morris and Joseph G. Butts, *Renewing America's Cities*. Washington D.C.: The Institute for Social Science Research, 1962 (2 copies)
24. Gropius, Walter. *Scope of Total Architecture*, New York: Collier Books, 1970 (4th edition).
25. Richards, J.M. *An Introduction to Modern Architecture*, London: Penguin Books, 1940.

26. *First Report of the Alumni in Architecture of Harvard University*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: 1932.
27. ND – no title – 11" X 14.5" album of great world architecture, mostly European, cardboard mounted.